

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method of early warning of potential litigation, within an entity, comprising:

gathering data from internal and external sources;

reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data;

5 prioritizing potential litigation issues;

consulting with outside counsel to obtain specialized assistance in selected issues;

determining whether an issue justifies an alert;

issuing an alert if justified and monitoring any action;

10 if an alert is not justified, determining whether said issue justifies a report;

issuing an report and tracking its issuance; and

15 if litigation on an issue occurs, proceeding in a traditional litigation manner, including risk assessments within a predetermined time frame and early dispute resolution.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said alert is an Early Warning System Alert.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said report is an Emerging Issue Report.

20 4. The method of claim 1 wherein said predetermined time frame is sixty days.

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5. The method of claim 1 wherein said monitoring further comprises:

- logging said alert on a database;
- deciding whether to implement pre-litigation changes;
- 5 documenting rationale for a negative decision, if said decision is negative;
- assigning corrective action;
- logging alert on to a compliance data base;
- implementing corrective action;
- 10 reporting implementation of corrective action to litigation department;
- updating said alert database to reflect timing and corrective action taken; and
- follow-up on completed items on a periodic basis to make sure enacted compliance actions are still in place and remain appropriate.

15 6. The method of claim 1 further comprises:  
sending a copy of said alert to organizations outside of said entity.

7. An article of manufacture comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for an early warning of litigation, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising:

5 computer readable program code means for causing a computer to gather data from internal and external sources;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist a user in reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data;

10 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to prioritize said potential litigation issues;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to communicate with and consult with outside counsel computer system to obtain specialized assistance in selected issues;

15 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide criteria for user to determine whether an issue justifies an alert;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issue an alert if found justified and monitoring any action from said system alert;

20 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist user to determine whether said issue justifies a report if an alert is not justified;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issue a report and tracking its issuance; and

25 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to monitor and support in a traditional litigation manner, including risk

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the article of manufacture of claim 5 wherein said alert is an Early Warning System Alert.



10. A computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for an early warning of litigation said computer program product having:

5 computer readable program code means for causing a computer to gather data from internal and external sources;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist a user in reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data;

10 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to prioritize said potential litigation issues;

*all* computer readable program code means for causing the computer to communicate with and consult with outside counsel computer system to obtain specialized assistance in selected issues;

15 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide criteria for user to determine whether an issue justifies an alert;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issuing said alert if found justified and monitoring any action from said alert;

20 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to assist user to determine whether said issue justifies a report if said alert is not justified;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to issue a report if justified and tracking its issuance; and

25 computer readable program code means for causing the computer to monitor and support in a traditional litigation manner, including risk assessment within a predetermined period and early dispute resolution if litigation on said issue occurs.

11. Computer program product of claim 9 wherein said alert is an Early Warning System Alert.

12. The computer program product of claim 9 wherein said report is an Emerging Issue Report.

13. In a computer network that includes (i) a plurality of servers for accessing a plurality of network sites containing various types of content, which can be viewed and listened to as appropriate, and downloaded when desired, and that includes (ii) a plurality of client systems connected to a server for purposes of browsing the network sites, a method of early warning of potential litigation, comprising:

gathering data from internal and external sources;

reviewing potential litigation issues from said gathered data;

prioritizing potential litigation issues;

consulting with outside counsel to obtain specialized assistance in selected issues;

determining whether an issue justifies an alert;

issuing said alert if justified and monitoring any action;

if an alert is not justified, determining whether said issue justifies a report;

issuing a report and tracking its issuance; and

if litigation on an issue occurs, proceeding in a traditional litigation manner, including risk assessments within a predetermined period and early dispute resolution.

14. The network of claim 12 wherein said alert is an Early Warning System alert.

15. The network of claim 12 wherein said report is an Emerging Issue Report.



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16. The network of claim 12 wherein said predetermined time period is sixty (60) days.

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